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EXCISE

GE 01 SANTIA 07495 01 OF 04 172056Z
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172044Z OCT 85
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3727

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 04 SANTIAGO 07495

MDIS DECAPTIONED

12356: DECL: OADR
GS: CASC (WEISFEILER, BORIS), CI
BJECT: WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS: CASE OF BORIS WEISFEILER

Chile Project (#S199900030)

U.S. Department of State

Release _____ Excise X Deny _____

Declassify: In Part X In Full _____

Exemption(s) B1

FS: (A) SANTIAGO 1080, (B) SANTIAGO 0901,
(C) SANTIAGO 0768

C - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY. WEISFEILER CASE HAS TAKEN A MOST SERIOUS
RN WITH STATEMENTS TO EMBASSY OFFICERS BY
THAT HE SUSPECTS CHILEAN POLICE
LLED WEISFEILER BELIEVING HE WAS A SUBVERSIVE OR
RRORIST, REALIZED THEIR MISTAKE TOO LATE, AND THEN
VERED UP BY FAKING AN APPARENT DROWNING. STATEMENTS
OTHER CHILEANS WHO SPOKE WITH POLICE ON DAY OF
SAPPEARANCE PROVIDE CIRCUMSTANTIAL SUPPORT FOR THIS
ORY, BUT NOT CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE. ACTION REQUESTED:
BASSY RECOMMENDS THAT EITHER WE OR WEISFEILER'S
ENDS, WHO WE KNOW ARE CONTINUING THEIR INVESTIGATION,
MALLY REQUEST CHILEAN JUDICIARY TO REOPEN THE INQUEST.
D SUMMARY.

ON SEPTEMBER 2, CHARGE AND RSO PAID A COURTESY CALL
GENERAL JUAN ALEGRIA, THE SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE

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ABINEROS. THEY LEFT AN AIDE MEMOIRE ON THE WEISFEILER
E AND REQUESTED THAT ALEGRIA LOOK INTO IT. ALEGRIA
URED CHARGE THAT HE WOULD, BUT TO DATE NO DIRECT
PONSE FROM CARABINEROS HAS BEEN RECEIVED. SHORTLY
REAFTER, A CONOFF RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM FORMIN
ICIAL SUGGESTING THAT IT WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME
EXCHANGE FURTHER DIPLOMATIC NOTES ON CASE SINCE

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NEW INFORMATION HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN MONTHS. GOC OFFICIAL WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY WAS NOT PREPARED TO DROP ITS INQUIRY.

ON SEPTEMBER 17, THE MINISTRY SENT US ITS DIPLOMATIC NOTE 21298, STATING THAT ON MAY 28 IT HAD REQUESTED THE CARABINEROS IN WRITING TO TAKE "MEASURES TENDING TO CLARIFY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PROFESSOR WEISFEILER. IN THE REPLY TO THAT REQUEST, RECEIVED WITH THE DATE OF JUNE 26, (THE CARABINEROS) REFERRED TO ALL THE ACTIONS TAKEN UNTIL THAT DATE WITH UNSUCCESSFUL RESULTS, GIVING COMPLETE DETAILS, AND CONCLUDING WITH A STATEMENT OF THEIR INTENTION TO DEACTIVATE THE SEARCH FOR THE DISAPPEARED (PERSON)." THE MINISTRY SAID IT HAD RECEIVED NOTHING FURTHER FROM THE CARABINEROS SINCE JUNE, BUT PROMISED THAT IF IT DID RECEIVE INFORMATION WOULD BE PROMPTLY COMMUNICATED TO THE EMBASSY. THE NOTE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT A JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION BY THE SECOND CRIMINAL COURT OF SAN CARLOS HAD BEEN OPENED INTO THE WEISFEILER DISAPPEARANCE IN JANUARY, AND SUGGESTED THAT ANY NEW REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION "AND OTHER POSSIBLE JUDICIAL STEPS THAT MIGHT BE DEEMED APPROPRIATE" SHOULD BE CHanneled THROUGH THE COURT. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT THIS SUGGESTION GIVES US A CLEAR JUSTIFICATION FOR A DIRECT APPROACH TO THE COURTS.

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ON SEPTEMBER 24 THE CHARGE INSTRUCTED THE CONGEN (A) FIND OUT FROM THE EMBASSY'S CHILEAN ATTORNEY WHETHER THE EMBASSY AND/OR FRIENDS OF WEISFEILER COULD MAKE REQUESTS OR SUBMISSIONS TO THE SAN CARLOS COURT, AND (B) TO HAVE A CONSULAR OFFICER VISIT THE AREA OF THE DISAPPEARANCE AND REINTERVIEW OLD AND POTENTIAL NEW WITNESSES. THE FORMER INQUIRY IS IN PROCESS; THE LATTER HAS BEEN DONE.

ON OCTOBER 7, THE MINISTRY SENT US ITS NOTE 22506, REPORTING THAT IT HAD RECEIVED A LETTER DATED OCTOBER 2 FROM CARABINEROS (POSSIBLY STIMULATED BY THE CHARGE'S LETTER ON GENERAL ALEGRIA). THE CARABINEROS STATED THAT BETWEEN JUNE 16 AND OCTOBER THEY HAD CARRIED OUT VARIOUS MOUNTED AND FOOT PATROLS IN THE AREA "WITHOUT POSITIVE RESULTS. MOREOVER, RESIDENTS, FISHERMEN, AND WATERS IN THE SECTOR HAVE BEEN CONSULTED, EQUALLY SUCCESSFULLY."

MEANWHILE, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS DEVELOPED

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RING VISITS TO THE AREA BY TWO SEPARATE CONOFFS, THE
RST OCTOBER 2-4 AND THE OTHER OCTOBER 9-11.
ISFEILER ARRIVED IN SANTIAGO ON DECEMBER 25, 1984.
TRAVELED TO LOS ANGELES, ABOUT 360 MILES SOUTH OF
NTIAGO, WHERE HE SPENT THE NIGHT OF THE 25TH AT
E HOTEL MARISCAL ALCAZAR. CONOFF SPOKE WITH JOSE
STILLO, AN EMPLOYEE OF THE HOTEL. WEISFEILER ASKED
STILLO FOR DETAILED INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN HIS PLAN
BACKPACK ALONG THE MOUNTAINS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND

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ILE. CASTILLO TOLD HIM HOW TO REACH LAKE LAJA WHICH
WHERE WEISFEILER SAID HE WANTED TO START HIS JOURNEY
THE MOUNTAINS. FROM THERE, HE WOULD TRAVEL NORTH
TIL HE REACHED A POINT EAST OF CHILLAN AND THEN HEAD
ST OUT OF THE MOUNTAINS TO SAN CARLOS, A TOWN NORTH
CHILLAN, AND FROM THERE BACK TO SANTIAGO.

WEISFEILER WAS NEXT SEEN JANUARY 3 AT ABOUT 1500
VALLE HERMOSO, A SPOT 18 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE
NFLUENCE OF THE NUBLE AND LOS SAUCES RIVERS. THIS
CALITY IS ON A LOGICAL ROUTE BETWEEN LOS ANGELES AND
KE LAJA. THERE HE MET A LOCAL FARMER/SHEPHERD NAMED
ECO LOPEZ, WHO INVITED HIM TO SPEND THE NIGHT AT HIS
BIN. ACCORDING TO LOPEZ, WEISFEILER OPENED HIS BACK-
CK AND DISPLAYED ITS CONTENTS. LOPEZ TOLD CONOFF HE
V HIKING BOOTS, HIGHLY DETAILED MAPS OF THE AREA,
ISFEILER'S US PASSPORT, US DOLLAR BILLS AND HIS
OTHING. (THE PASSPORT AND MONEY WERE MISSING WHEN THE
CKPACK WAS LATER FOUND.) CHECO ALSO NOTED, WHEN

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TO EXAMINE THE CONTENTS OF THE BACK-

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CK, THAT A STRIPED SHIRT WAS MISSING.

THE NEXT MORNING (JANUARY 4) AT APPROXIMATELY 0900, CHECO HELPED WEISFEILER CROSS TO THE NORTH BANK OF THE NUBLE RIVER BY HORSEBACK. HE NOTICED THAT WEISFEILER WAS EXPERIENCED IN CROSSING STRONG CURRENT RIVERS. CHECO REMARKED TO BOTH VISITING CONOFFS THAT IT SEEMED STRANGE TO HIM THAT WEISFEILER WOULD LATER DECIDE TO CROSS THE LOS SAUCES RIVER WHERE ALLEGEDLY HE DID.

THAT SAME DAY (JANUARY 4), CHECO'S BROTHER, LUIS PEZ, WHO LIVES 18 KILOMETERS NORTH OF VALLE HERMOSO LOS MAYOS, ALSO SAW WEISFEILER BRIEFLY WHEN THEY MET EACH OTHER AT ABOUT 1600 ON THE TRAIL NEAR LUIS' HOUSE. HE HAD SEVERAL DAYS GROWTH OF BEARD, WAS DRESSED IN MILITARY-LIKE OLIVE DRAB TROUSERS AND WAS CARRYING A GREEN BACKPACK. LUIS CONTINUED DOWN THE TRAIL HERDING OXEN AND UPON ARRIVAL AT EL ROBLE, THE CARABINERO STATION THAT LIES BETWEEN LOS MAYOS AND VALLE HERMOSO, REPORTED THAT HE HAD SEEN A STRANGE MAN WALKING NEAR HIS HOUSE EARLIER THAT AFTERNOON.

HE SAID THAT THE CARABINEROS APPEARED TO BE ALARMED BY THE FACT THAT SOMEONE WAS IN THE AREA WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE (VISITORS TO REMOTE RURAL AREAS ARE SUPPOSED TO REPORT TO THE LOCAL CARABINERO STATION UPON ENTERING THE AREA). TWO, PERHAPS THREE, RODE OFF ON HORSEBACK TO SEARCH FOR THE STRANGER. (CONSULATE HAS THE NAMES OF THESE CARABINEROS.) WHEN CONOFF TALKED TO THE OFFICER WHO LED THE SEARCH PARTY FROM EL ROBLE, SHE WAS TOLD THAT THE CARABINEROS WERE EXTREMELY FRIGHTENED BY THE POSSIBILITY THAT A "POLITICAL EXTREMIST" MIGHT HAVE CROSSED THE ARGENTINE BORDER INTO CHILE AND CONTINUED UNDETECTED TO THE TOWNS OF SAN FABIAN AND SAN CARLOS.

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THE OFFICER WAS AFRAID OF GETTING INTO SERIOUS TROUBLE IF HIS SUPERIORS SHOULD HE ALLOW SUCH A THING TO OPEN. HE AND HIS MEN ALLEGEDLY SEARCHED FOR THE UNKNOWN MAN FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS OR UNTIL DUSK, FINDING ONLY BOOT TRACKS LEADING TO A SPOT ON THE BANK OF THE LOS SAUCES ABOVE THE POINT WHERE IT MEETS THE NUBLE RIVER.

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1. WITHIN A WEEK AFTER MEETING WEISFEILER, CHECO LOPEZ PASSED BY EL ROBLE ON HIS WAY TO VISIT HIS PARENTS AT LOS MAYOS. WHEN HE STOPPED TO GREET THE CARABINEROS AT THE STATION, THEY TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD LET A POLITICAL EXTREMIST FROM ARGENTINA PASS. CHECO INSISTED THAT THE MAN WAS AN AMERICAN AND NOT AN EXTREMIST. THE CARABINERO BERATED HIM FOR HAVING BEHAVED NEGLIGENTLY BY NOT INFORMING THEM IMMEDIATELY OF THE PRESENCE OF A STRANGER IN THE AREA. ONLY WHEN CHECO SHOWED THEM THE GIFTS WEISFEILER HAD GIVEN HIM (CHOCOLATES, TEA, FISHING LURES) WERE THEY CONVINCED, ACCORDING TO CHECO, THAT THE MAN MUST HAVE BEEN AN AMERICAN.

2. THE CHIEF OF THE CARABINERO STATION AT SAN CARLOS CONTACTED CHECO A FEW DAYS LATER AFTER CONVERSING WITH HIS COUNTERPART AT EL ROBLE. HE TOOK HIM TO THE LOT WHERE ALLEGEDLY FOOTPRINTS HAD BEEN FOUND. CHECO DID NOT SEE ANY.

3. AFTER INTERVIEWS WITH CHECO AND LUIS LOPEZ, CONOFF CALLED ON THE SAN FABIAN CARABINEROS. THE COMMANDING OFFICER, CAPITAN FERNANDEZ, SHOWED CONCERN THAT CONOFF

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3. MANAGED TO PASS THE SAN FABIAN CARABINERO STATION WITHOUT BEING SIGHTED AND REPRIMANDED HER FOR NOT MAKING KNOWN HER PRESENCE IN SAN FABIAN. HE REQUIRED HER TO SIGN A PAPER STATING THAT SHE HAD TRAVELED UP THE NUBLE RIVER

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BEYOND SAN FABIAN WITHOUT CARABINERO PERMISSION. WHEN
SECOND CONOFF VISITED THIS TOWN ONE WEEK LATER, THE
CARABINEROS LEARNED RAPIDLY OF HER PRESENCE, FOLLOWED
HER TO CHECO LOPEZ' HOUSE AND WERE WAITING WHEN SHE
DEPARTED. CONOFF VISITED THE STATION TO OBTAIN THE
NAMES OF ALL CARABINEROS STATIONED AT EL ROBLE AT THE
TIME OF WEISFEILER'S DISAPPEARANCE. THEY AGREED TO
CONTACT LUIS LOPEZ BY RADIO FROM EL ROBLE AND ASK HIM
TO MEET CONOFF LATER IN THE DAY. HE NEVER APPEARED.

THAT EVENING, UPON RETURNING TO SAN FABIAN, CONOFF
WAS TOLD SHE COULD SPEAK WITH CAPITAN FERNANDEZ AND HIS
ASSISTANT, MAJOR IBACACHE, THE NEXT MORNING IN SAN CARLOS.
EITHER OF THEM KEPT THE APPOINTMENT. MOREOVER, TWO
UNKNOWN CARABINEROS APPEARED AT THE HOTEL IN CHILLAN
WHERE CONOFF WAS STAYING TO ANNOUNCE THAT THEY HAD BEEN

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NT TO PROTECT THE EMBASSY VEHICLE. THEY WERE CONCERNED
THAT NIGHT AND THE FOLLOWING MORNING WITH CONOFF'S
ITINERARY, HER LENGTH OF STAY IN THE AREA AND WHEN SHE
ANNOUNCED TO RETURN TO SANTIAGO. CONOFF HAD DISTINCT
PRESSION THAT THE OFFICIALS WERE KEEPING CLOSE TRACK
OF HER WHEREABOUTS FROM THE TIME SHE ARRIVED UNTIL THE
TIME SHE DEPARTED. THEY STATED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN FOR
HER SAFETY AND DISPLAYED ANXIETY OVER HER ACTIVITIES
IN THE AREA.

BOTH CONOFFS SPOKE AT LENGTH WITH [REDACTED]

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HE HYPOTHESIZED TO BOTH CONOFFS
THAT THE CARABINEROS MIGHT HAVE OVERREACTED UPON
LEARNING OF THE PRESENCE OF A STRANGER IN THE AREA AS
THE PINOCHET GOVERNMENT IS, HE SAID, "PARANOID ABOUT
FOREIGN LEFTIST EXTREMISTS" OR LEFT-LEANING CHILEAN
VEHICLES ENTERING CHILE VIA THE ISOLATED ARGENTINE
BORDER. HE FELT THE CARABINEROS PROBABLY WENT IN HOT
PURSUIT CONVINCED OF THEIR WORST FEAR, THE CLANDESTINE
ENTRY OF A POLITICAL EXTREMIST. C... HE
SUSPECTS THAT THEY MAY HAVE KILLED WEISFEILER ON THIS
ASSUMPTION, REALIZED THEIR MISTAKE TOO LATE, AND THEN
TRIED TO COVER UP THE FACT BY PLANTING HIS BACKPACK ON
THE RIVER BANK DOWNSTREAM. HE SUSPECTS THAT WEISFEILER'S

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DY WILL NOT BE FOUND IN THE RIVER, BUT RATHER HAS BEEN
SPOSED OF SOMEWHERE IN THE ISOLATED MOUNTAIN REACHES OF
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E CHILEAN/ARGENTINE BORDER.

[] ONE CONCRETE ACTION EMBASSY MIGHT
KE: ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE WHETHER WEISFEILER WAS
CORDED AS CROSSING INTO ARGENTINA IN JANUARY OR
BRUARY BY EITHER CHILEAN OR ARGENTINE IMMIGRATION.

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SUGGESTED THAT POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME ARE
METIMES TAKEN INTO REMOTE AREAS OF ARGENTINA AND
NE AWAY WITH THERE, IN THE PROCESS CREATING AN
PARENT RECORD OF HAVING LEFT CHILEAN HANDS AND
RISDICTION. EMBASSY WILL ASK CHILEAN IMMIGRATION TO
KE A RECORD CHECK. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT TO
K EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES TO DO THE SAME.

ON OUR MOST RECENT TRIP TO THE AREA, CONOFF
ARNED [] OF A LAWYER IN CONCEPCION, WHO IS
OKING INTO THE CASE. APPARENTLY, WEISFEILER'S
LLEAGUES AND FRIENDS IN THE US ARE INITIATING YET
OTHER PRIVATE INQUIRY INTO HIS DISAPPEARANCE. A
NVERSION WITH THIS ATTORNEY PRODUCED NO NEW
SIGHTS BUT REVEALED THAT WEISFEILER'S FRIENDS ARE NOT
FISFIED WITH THE DROWNING THEORY IN LIGHT OF THE
CT THAT HIS BODY HAS NEVER BEEN RECOVERED.
EPARTMENT MAY RECALL THAT A CHILEAN PRIVATE DETECTIVE
S HIRED BY THESE SAME PEOPLE SOME MONTHS AGO. HE
PORTED HIS FINDINGS TO A MATHEMATICS PROFESSOR AT
RVARD, WHO IN TURN CONTACTED SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY'S
FICE RELATIVE TO THE MATTER.)

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7. COMMENT. IN ADDITION TO THESE EXTRAORDINARY
STATEMENTS [] THERE ARE ENOUGH

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INCONSISTENCIES IN TESTIMONY GATHERED IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY AND LATER BY TWO CONOFFS TO WARRANT FURTHER INVESTIGATION. IT IS UNCLEAR WHO FOUND THE BACKPACK (CARABINEROS OR A LOCAL FARMER/ RAPPER NAMED ALADINO CONTRERAS); WHERE WAS IT FOUND IN THE RIVER OR ON THE BANK); THE CONDITION OF THE BACKPACK (WET OR DRY); AND WHETHER THERE WERE IN FACT FOOTPRINTS AT THE SITE WHERE WEISFEILER ALLEGEDLY ATTEMPTED THE RIVER CROSSING (CARABINEROS AND MARCIAL ANDOVAL, A LOCAL FARMER WHO OPERATES THE CABLE CAR RIDGE OVER THE LOS SAUCES RIVER, CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN THEM ON JANUARY 4 BUT CHECO LOPEZ REPORTED THAT HE DIDN'T). IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT FOUR OF THE FIVE CARABINEROS STATIONED AT EL ROBLE WERE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER POSTS IN THE REGION IN APRIL. THE FOURTH WAS TRANSFERRED IN JUNE AND RETIRED IN AUGUST. (THE CONSULATE HAS THE NAMES AND PRESENT LOCATION OF ALL FIVE.) MOREOVER, WEISFEILER'S HEAVY HIKING BOOTS, HIS OTHER SHOES, AND HIS TWO PAIRS OF PANTS WERE ALL RECOVERED. THE BOOTS WERE ADMIRER BY CHECO LOPEZ AND

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COULD BE PRIZED BY LOCAL FARMERS WHO WORK IN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TERRAIN. IN CONTRAST, WEISFEILER'S STRIPED SHIRT, HIS PASSPORT AND A SMALL AMOUNT OF US MONEY WERE THE ONLY MISSING ITEMS, ALL USELESS TO THE LOCAL POPULACE.

EMBASSY SEES THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION:

EMBASSY COULD ASK THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND/OR CARABINEROS TO RENEW THEIR INVESTIGATION. HOWEVER, LESS WE SHARED WITH THEM [] STATEMENTS, WHICH WOULD BREAK A CONFIDENCE AND POSSIBLY PLACE HIS LIFE IN DANGER, THERE IS LITTLE WE COULD SAY WHICH WOULD IMPEL THEM TO REOPEN THE CASE. DEPARTMENT COULD INFORM WEISFEILER'S FRIENDS OF WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THEIR

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APPARENTLY CONTINUING INVESTIGATION AND SUGGEST THEY
MIGHT WISH TO FILE A FORMAL REQUEST

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FOR A SPECIAL INVESTIGATION.

- ASSUMING OUR ATTORNEY TELLS US IT IS FEASIBLE AND
THE DEPARTMENT CONCURS, EMBASSY ITSELF COULD MAKE A
FORMAL REQUEST

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REOPEN THE INVESTIGATION. THE
APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL INVESTIGATING JUDGE (MINISTRO
VISITA) IS ONE POSSIBILITY THAT WE WILL LOOK INTO.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS.
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